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Conclusion

We all possess a significant motivation for acquiescing to the concealment of the state. Concealing the state frees us from admitting the unpleasant truth: in today's world we are utterly dependent on the state. We prefer the comfortable illusion that we are autonomous individuals pursuing our plans in a free market. If we hold fast to that idea, then our distance from policy makers and dwindling political influence doesn't seem so important. Instead, many of us like to believe that there is an economic reality detached from politics. This belief frees us from the responsibility of political action, and we can prioritize our private life concentrating on careers, family, and other projects without guilt.

Yet, the environment within which we pursue these individual goals is shaped by the state in both a positive and negative sense. After all, the state can empower us. This influence includes the state's investments in infrastructure that allow for economic growth, educational policies that benefit many, and retirement guarantees for our long-term planning. This positive area of state involvement is what we stand to lose first as the state's agency is concealed, leaving us with what the marketplace will sell. However, we know that the state can change the parameters of the marketplace. The state can intervene in our daily lives and provide guarantees and support that radically alter our quality of life.

On the other hand, the negative influence of the state consists of its failures. Concealing the state allows us to ignore the state's increasingly frantic efforts to control risk. Our world faces ecological limits that mean the status quo of global capitalism is unsustainable. The growing possibility of catastrophe, whether from an industrial or technological accident (we can think of GM food nightmares, artificial organisms, nuclear power plant accidents, or terrorism with weapons of mass destruction), forces us into the arms of the state. We are dependent on the decisions of the state as never before. The concealment of the state papers over this grim reality.

Aside from these common motivations and distractions, elites in our societies are also strongly attached to the ideology of concealing the state. Many politicians, so visible in the shallow state, have an immediate interest to continue this concealment. With the current dominance of free-market ideology across the world, it is easier to appeal to voters by accepting this trend rather than challenging it. In those policy areas where the state's self-preservation is itself at risk, the visible policy makers know they can rely on the deep state to quietly implement difficult policies. In complex policy areas that attract less public attention, political elites have little incentive to risk their careers. Thus, there is a clear political logic behind the ideological conformity we find among governing elites.

Yet, this reliance on the deep state is less a strategy and more of a delaying tactic. An important question is at what point will shifting policy to the deep state completely hollow out political meaning in the shallows? In many states, the increasing tendency of politics to devolve into lifestyle, consumer, and de facto entertainment questions points the way. This erosion of political content undermines the efficacy of political participation. Our ability to hold the state accountable is at risk as it denies having the capacity to act on our concerns.

The danger for democracy within this context has received a growing level of scrutiny from political scientists and political philosophers. For example, Jeffrey Edward Green has argued that the idea of participation within democracy should be recast as one of spectator rather than participant.¹ His point is that it is increasingly unrealistic to hold on to the classical idea of a citizen as an active participant within the deliberations of our vast, complex nation states. Instead, Green argues that we should rethink the role of citizen as one who critically observes the deliberations of those elites who are actively participating in governance. This leads Green to advocate for elevating the virtue of candor within contemporary democracies to the place formerly held by direct citizen participation.

In a narrower study of the American presidency, legal theorists Posner and Vermeule reach a similar conclusion.² They argue that the executive in the American system (and presumably most political systems) has become completely dominant despite constitutional checks on executive authority. To a large extent, Posner and Vermeule see this development as irresistible given the challenges faced by modern "administrative" states. However, they argue that the presidency in the United States is still constrained by public opinion and the constant scrutiny that Green discussed in his broader study of contemporary democracy.

What is striking about both of these studies is their apologetic themes for the contemporary state. Both Green's broad study and Posner and Vermeule's analysis of the American presidency concede that classical theories of democracy and popular participation no longer match reality. Yet, rather than criticizing contemporary institutions from this foundation, they

argue that new realistic theories of democratic participation are required. In Green's case, he attempts to revive the idea of plebiscitary democracy in a positive form. For Posner and Vermeule, the power of the modern executive becomes acceptable because it still faces the constraints of popular opinion expressed in polling and elections.

In contrast, a number of political theorists have developed more critical, activist arguments about contemporary democracy. For example, Nadia Urbinati has argued that the classical ideal of democratic representation is unrealistic but she has also attempted to develop a critical replacement.³ In an earlier stage of her argument, Urbinati compared two major philosophical views on representation from John Locke and Edmund Burke.⁴ In Locke's social contract theory, my representative was a delegate, a stand-in for myself so that I do not have to devote myself full time to government business. On the other hand, Urbinati points out that few of us would be willing to represent Burke's contrasting view of a "trustee" representative. Burke famously argued that a representative must be willing to tell his constituents "no" and overrule their wishes for their own good. However, the shortcomings of these classical views of representation have led Urbinati to reformulate democratic representation as an idea of advocacy. Urbinati has in mind the role of other expert advocates in contemporary society such as lawyers, teachers, social workers, or medical professionals. While we must rely on these advocates' expertise to make our case for us, Urbinati argues these roles are not as paternalistic as Burke suggested, or as unrealistic as Locke's delegates.

Thus, a great deal of contemporary scholarship in political theory, political science, and more activist social criticism senses that there is something wrong with our current understanding and practice of democracy. However, most of this commentary is oriented toward returning the state to accountability. From the argument of preceding chapters, this goal of accountability is made ever more difficult by the ideology of concealing the state. How can citizens regain and keep any oversight of a concealed state? Furthermore, what sort of common strategies can we pursue in confronting this ideology given the fact that it has become dominant across widely varying political systems? This last point is especially challenging. The larger the number of political systems adopting the ideology of concealment, the more this state of affairs seems "natural" rather than ideological.

On the other hand, despite the growing trend of concealing the state, not all states are equal in both a literal and moral sense. Just as some states are more powerful in the world, so too some are better for human flourishing. At times in this text my description of the concealment of the state implies that all regimes are fundamentally the same ideologically. However, it is easy to see on pragmatic grounds the relative advantages and disadvantages of different states. We can compare the broad free speech protections and very open media of the United States to the self-censorship

and state manipulation currently present in the authoritarian regimes of Russia or China. Many of us admire the better social justice available in Scandinavia from the governments there. Few of us would willingly opt for the authoritarian regimes found in many places. The fact that not all states are the same should be seen as a source of inspiration.

If there are such differences in the quality of life under various states, then this shows that there is the possibility of improvement. The fact that authoritarian regimes have been overthrown by popular action proves that significant political change is possible in today's world. The difficulty we face for reform or improvement obviously depends on the starting point. As we have seen most recently in the Arab-speaking world, and two decades earlier in Eastern Europe, facing down authoritarian regimes often calls for great risk and sacrifice. In some cases, the regime is so bankrupt that it must be displaced in entirety. On the other hand, those of us fortunate enough to be living under open and democratic regimes face a more subtle set of challenges within highly developed and pluralistic political systems. Regardless of which type of state we live under, there are two broad challenges for contemporary political action: revealing and challenging the state.

Revealing the state

Arguably, the best way to challenge the ideology of concealment is to expose the agency of the state. If the state can deny from the outset that it has the ability to act on our concerns, then it is difficult to imagine how any new theory of democratic accountability can influence it. Regardless of our tactics, the concealed state can stonewall us by insisting that there is nothing it can do. Thus, the most important challenge to the ideology of concealing the state is to expose the state's unused, or misdirected, power.

However, a source of strength for concealing the state is the increasing "transparency" found elsewhere in our contemporary society and culture. In the sphere of consumption, individuals are increasingly accustomed to instant feedback, user reviews, and the constant scrutiny a world of users can bring to bear upon private companies and services. In addition, the rise of social media has created the appearance of a constant flow of information about everyone in real time. All of this activity gives the impression of much transparency in our daily lives. The distraction of our consumer activities, and perhaps the self-satisfaction we derive from being smart consumers, is an obstacle to tuning into state activity.

These cultural changes also seem to be eroding our older distinctions of private and public spheres. This erosion implies that our sense of a separate, civic area of life is becoming lost in the collision of our private acts of consumption with public interaction. Some commentators have expressed concern that the growing popularity of social media like Facebook may lead

to future legal decisions where the reasonable expectation of privacy is much reduced.⁵ Similarly, Lyon has expressed concern about the cultural changes that make increased surveillance more socially acceptable. He is concerned that the increasing acceptance of voyeurism in our popular culture

...helps to explain further why companies and governments seem to have so little trouble selling and installing surveillance technologies.⁶

With all of this noise, it is easier for the state to recede into the background. Our daily life seems increasingly transparent compared to the past. Since it is so difficult to keep anything private in today's interconnected world, we assume that the state and politics must also be increasingly transparent.

Thus, an ironic outcome of our current communications technology is that the state is harder to see than ever. The increasing universe of information available to us seems a likely resource to expose the state, but its sheer volume undermines the efficacy of this information. Rather than greater transparency, this wilderness of information from traditional and new sources enables the state's concealment. For example, a recent report by the US Federal Communications Commission expressed alarm over the decline in local reporting.⁷ The study found that despite the abundance of new media outlets, the decline of local newspapers is leaving a vacuum at the local level in the United States. The report warns that this loss of oversight at the local level risks leaving citizens in the dark about local government activities. Citizens may feel that they have more choice than ever for information and news, but in many political systems, much of this information has become centralized in its focus, despite its fragmentary delivery. Any one of us can blog online about local government and community affairs. However, who will listen to us among all of the choices out there and why should they respect our particular opinion?

This point is the central difficulty with making use of new technologies to reveal the state. Despite the cacophony of voices we find in this new landscape, recent examples of technology and social media have led some observers to conclude that we are entering a new era of radical transparency. The best example of this trend is the media coverage and commentary surrounding the WikiLeaks case. In one commentary on the WikiLeaks case, Umberto Eco suggested that we have entered an age where the citizen can now turn the tables and spy upon the state.⁸ The plausibility of Eco's claim seems to be enhanced by the reaction of many web activists who supported the activities of WikiLeaks by hosting its servers, and by the retaliation of online hackers to the pressure placed on WikiLeaks.

Despite this high-profile case, it is difficult to imagine that these sorts of efforts can lead to larger political transformations. Already the state is attempting to adapt to these new forms of communication technology. A prime example of these efforts was the recently revealed US program of

placing propaganda on social media through the use of false Facebook and Twitter identities.⁹ The rapid pace at which marketing has taken over social media also suggests we should be skeptical. The new tactics for commercial companies in the social media age include the interesting examples of companies paying individuals to start up “buzz” about products and write positive reviews.¹⁰

How do we know whether to trust this information we see online? Initially it seemed that simply the scale of feedback encountered online, such as a very large number of posted, anonymous reviews about a product, could insure that, despite some planted fakes, an overall clear picture would emerge. Now with the increasingly sophisticated tactics of advertising, relying on simple rules of scale do not ensure reliable information.¹¹ Without the voice of trusted media sources, it seems that all of the information coming from our new technology risks becoming more unreliable noise. Thus, despite the excitement surrounding new communications technology and less hierarchical means of organizing the media, a critical piece of resolving this problem is the role of intermediaries.

A growing body of political science research points to the need for strong intermediaries to enable effective democratic participation. For example, in an exhaustive study of accountability in Italy, political scientists found that even criminal charges failed to dislodge incumbent representatives, unless local media were effective at communicating the situation to voters.¹² The need for intermediaries in a political system emerges once we move beyond small-scale interaction. This is an important point because, as was discussed at the beginning of this book, critics of the state since Rousseau’s time have contended that scaling down to direct democratic participation is the best way to check the power of the state. A similar vein of argument can be found in contemporary political theory. Philosophers like John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas have attempted to elucidate the procedures needed to insure that outcomes are democratic by focusing on smaller scale interactions. One consistent challenge to the project of such theorists harkens back to Rousseau and the anarchists. How can the positive forms, procedures, and outcomes of small-scale interaction ever be scaled up to the complexity of a contemporary state?

For example, consider Habermas’ extremely well-developed theory of discourse ethics.¹³ Despite the complexity and subtlety of his work, the main point of Habermas’ philosophy is easy to grasp in a small-scale interaction between individuals. If I present a paper at an academic conference, then I enter a discourse with others. Habermas argues that in such a setting all of us participating in this event entered with assumptions of mutual intelligibility. In other words, we would not rationally engage in this activity if we did not expect some sort of end result. Hence, there is some form of reason present in our efforts to communicate with one another. Furthermore, this is not just instrumental thinking, participating for the sake of some outcome. We also

have a prior, deeper commitment to reasonable intelligibility. If we did not, then we would not have a basis for interacting with each other.

However, even in a small-scale interaction questions can emerge. Why did I travel to and participate in the conference? Was it because I wanted to debate an important issue with others and get to the bottom of it? Did I go because I felt a conference appearance would help my quest for tenure? Did I want an excuse to visit a different city, while drawing upon departmental funding? Habermas argues that this initial motivation for joining the conversation does not matter. Regardless of why I attended, participation would be based on some common procedures and debate about my paper would be on “reasonable” grounds. I may have hidden motivations and be engaged in some double game, but the rules of the discourse will produce a reasonable end despite that.

This idea seems plausible in a small-scale interaction like a conference. However, it seems much less plausible when we apply it to larger forms of political activity. The difficulty is the qualitative difference that emerges when we apply communicative action to broader issues on a social scale compared to smaller individual interactions. Politics introduces an important moral dimension that requires some judgments about the original motivation of discourse participants. Central to Habermas’ overall argument is the idea that reason is integral to human communication because I wish to convince or explain to others some goal.

But as stated earlier in this work, we can find many examples of human interaction that rely on subterfuge. Most cultures accept some form of white lies in personal relationships and a degree of exaggeration in the marketplace. Our judgment about the use of dishonesty in these situations is influenced by the motivation of the individual. A white lie to avoid unnecessary hurt among friends is very different from commercially motivated fraud. Politics is an even better example of the disconnect between the motives, speech, and actions of individuals. Yet, politics also differs from other examples of human deception because the stakes are so much higher.

For some guidance on this issue, we can turn to classic political philosophy. A point that has deep roots in this tradition is the difference between the way things are and the way they seem to be. In the case of Machiavelli, he urges a prince to take advantage of this dichotomy. It enables a prince to maintain the facade of being good, and reaping the advantages of such an appearance, while doing what needs to be done. More generally, the classical idea of remembering this distinction enables one to look critically at the motivations of political actors. This cynical position enables us to expose hidden motives and influence.

Consider Thucydides’ description, in *The Peloponnesian War*, of Diodotus’ speech for leniency toward Mytilene before the assembly at Athens. As one commentator points out, “the intellectual attitude of both Cleon and Diodotus is determined by their immediate purposes, and their

speeches are essentially dishonest.”¹⁴ If Diodotus appeals to the Athenians on the grounds of justice, then they will assume that he has instrumental motives. On the other hand, we know that the Athenians are concerned about the justice of their previous decision to harshly punish the Mytilenes. In the end, Diodotus argues for leniency on the cold grounds of political expediency. He argues that leniency now toward democratic elements in Mytilene may encourage rebellious elements in other cities to defect or surrender to Athens later. Ironically, he must lie to the assembly to get it to do the right thing. He conceals his concern for justice within an argument of power politics. As another commentator points out,

In our conclusions about the causes of this Athenian decision, we must weigh the subtle force of this style of argument—with this specific audience—in addition to its context.¹⁵

Thus, to understand what happened in this political discourse at Athens, it is important to weigh the stature of the individual speaking and how he presents his argument.

How has this historical example been handed down to us? Would I know if the individual is participating in a double game? In Thucydides’ example, Diodotus misleads the assembly with the rhetoric of political expediency so that they make a humane decision. We know about this classic double game of discourse, not because of the assembly exposing it among themselves, but thanks to the authority of the author, Thucydides. He applied analysis to this situation and reveals the facts to us. Did the members of the assembly recognize all of this? Did they reveal the hidden motives in their midst? Perhaps they did, but used Diodotus’ argument as political cover while really voting their conscience.

This ancient example of politics may seem odd to think about when discussing contemporary concerns. Nonetheless, it illustrates the problem Habermas’ discourse ethics has when weighing the normative content of politics. His theory’s foundation in the pragmatism of communicating to solve common problems is difficult to scale up. It is easy to imagine individuals working together on a common, well-defined problem. It becomes much more difficult to accept when we move to broader, high stakes politics. In the latter case, the motivation of individuals does have a moral bearing on the questions we consider. Yet, who can expose these motivations other than intermediaries like an authoritative commentator?

If this is the case for a society on the scale of ancient Athens, then we can expect more complications in our contemporary setting. In our experience of contemporary democracy, it takes someone with stature to engage effectively with the state. An individual citizen’s voice, regardless of how rational, cannot expose double games like a media authority of national stature. We are dependent upon *The New York Times* or a similar voice of authority

to weigh in. Other possible voices are respected commentators and critics. In addition, we increasingly see celebrities adopting political causes. In all cases, we are dependent on voices with stature. This intermediary's stature may be highly imaginary, such as celebrity support of political causes, but the voice of such intermediaries is necessary for a discourse to reach and engage citizens.

How do these intermediaries acquire such stature? There seem to be two routes. The first and obvious is a long track record in exposing the hidden motivations and double games of political participants. Here we can think of established media that are recognized for their independence and past efforts. If one doubts their importance, then the easy example is to look at the lengths to which authoritarian and totalitarian regimes go to silence such critics.

Under authoritarian regimes, any media willing to speak the truth can become an important intermediary quite suddenly. The wealth of documentary evidence available from the former totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe shows that even one individual voice can undermine a tightly closed, ideological regime. What is much more difficult to imagine, and establish, is how such truth-telling intermediaries can emerge within developed, postmodern states. This conundrum brings us to the other option for establishing an intermediary's legitimacy.

This second route is to comment on politics from an area of clear autonomy. The best example is the arts. Recently, political theorist Benjamin Barber has devoted some effort to exploring why the arts are important for a democracy.¹⁶ Barber argues that the fine arts form an important interest-free space that escapes our contemporary consumer culture. From this more autonomous area, the arts can critique society, and government, with a voice that is much more authoritative than political or popular commentary.

However, it is difficult to imagine how either of these routes toward becoming an intermediary could be a strategic decision. The occurrences in life that drive an artist, or the many incidents that establish the track record of an authoritative voice in journalism, are impossible to create as a political response to the immediate. Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine how the state can be exposed politically without using an intermediary. How could just any discourse, like all of the chatter we find in our current communications media, perform this task without establishing itself as an authority of some sort?

In the example of discourse on a small scale that I discussed earlier, the setting was presenting a paper at a conference. At the end of a presentation, the audience will reach its own conclusions about the merits of the paper. The idea of needing to reach mutual understanding and intelligibility among such a small group of actors, regardless of individual motives, seems plausible. Whatever reason I had for coming to a conference and giving a paper, the audience will judge the paper on reasonable grounds. So, even if

my individual motivations are of a baser sort, they will be transcended by the activity of discourse. A similar logic applies to much of our activity in social media and across the Internet.

What is less clear is how these simpler discourses could be built up into something as complicated as the politics we find in democratic societies. Consider a simpler example such as misleading research in medicine compared to political theory. On an abstract level, we may argue that concealing contrary results or misleading others in our findings is the same academic transgression in either field. Nevertheless, the consequences of dishonesty in medical research are much more harmful to others. In the realm of political theory, only my reputation and the squandering of other experts' time are at risk.

In the example of medical research, the motivations of actors matter more because the stakes are so high. So the relative weight of effort and performance matters depending on the field. Similarly, it is important to know what motives a politician has for advocating war or peace. In the case of war, we are deciding the morality of taking human lives. The motives of individuals debating such a topic matter in a way the motives of those debating an academic paper do not. Thus, the ability to recognize double games and hidden motives is morally necessary when we engage in politics at this level.

Furthermore, continued participation in political discourse requires motivation. If the individual's real motivation (an emotional attachment) is disguised, then how much commitment does he have toward democratic participation? How do we know if others are participating authentically in the discourse? Over time, will the requirements of a double game undermine the individual's commitment to participating in democratic institutions? Will this harm the legitimacy of democratic institutions?

After all, the use of double games reduces communication based on practical reason to an instrumental strategy. Couldn't an individual engage in a double game of reaching conclusions for emotional reasons, then dress up his arguments in a rational disguise like the ancient Diodotus? Perhaps to Habermas this does not matter. As long as the individual uses practical reason in public discourse, others will be convinced, or not, on the grounds of practical reason rather than the emotional commitment concealed underneath. Thus, the individual's internal motivation could be detached from her external activity.

Nonetheless, I suspect that Habermas would admit that it is important to discover the motives individuals have for advocating war, peace, or even more mundane political topics. Yet, is it through discourse over time that we uncover these hidden interests? Habermas often refers in his work to the tension between participant and observer perspectives. For Habermas this point is important because discourse ethics rests on the thin foundation of reason motivating the participants. Thus, Habermas asks,

How can we appropriate naïve, everyday ethical knowledge in a critical fashion without at the same time destroying it through theoretical objectification? How can ethical knowledge become reflective from the perspective of the participants themselves?¹⁷

Unfortunately, it is precisely the jaded “observer” perspective of intermediaries that is required to expose the moral dimension of discourse participants’ motivations.

Habermas’ theory is often interpreted as a philosophical argument that advocates civil society as a means of keeping the state accountable. Concerns with keeping the state accountable have driven much scholarly discussion of civil society in recent years.¹⁸ However, reliance on civil society is not a guarantee of democracy or democratic outcomes. Movements from below can also be destructive calls for nationalism or other political programs that Habermas would criticize.¹⁹ Much of the civil society scholarship is also weak on explaining how this area avoids co-optation in contemporary postmodern states. Instead, the available scholarship tends to focus on the use of civil society against authoritarian regimes or its reemergence with the collapse of totalitarian regimes.²⁰

The situation within postmodern states is very different. As discussed, the challenge within these political systems is not asserting the right to speak or publish. There is a world of tools available for such activity, and a free online forum waiting for political speech. Instead, the challenge within the postmodern state is raising a critical voice above all of the background noise. For this reason, we need to think about the role of critical intermediaries that expose the state’s agency.

Does the idea of using intermediaries to challenge the state seem paradoxical? After all, the suggestion implies that one needs a different set of authorities to challenge state authorities. Such a program does not sound very new or different than the scrum of traditional politics. Nor does it sound like a tactic at home within the anarchist tradition.

On the other hand, we have had a recent example of an intermediary emerging from obscurity and challenging the state with the WikiLeaks case.²¹ After the disclosure of a large trove of classified US diplomatic cables began, various officials from the United States and other governments reacted with a sort of hysteria. Secretary of State Clinton claimed the leaks represented an attack on democracy, and several American officials quickly attempted to outdo each other in their calls for severity. Unsubstantiated claims that WikiLeaks has blood on its hands from these actions have been referred to in calls for prosecution. These extreme reactions showed the extent to which the WikiLeaks disclosures struck at the concealment of the state.

Furthermore, this example of an intermediary revealing the state shows the moral difference that emerges when the stakes under consideration are higher. Many officials and political commentators argued that the

exposure of “private” diplomatic activity undermined its effectiveness. The comparisons they used were to individuals having private details made embarrassingly public. But the governments of nation states are not individuals. Nor are officials acting as diplomats (and filing cables filled with advice and suggestions) mere individuals swapping private opinions. The diplomatic activities of these states have repercussions for millions of citizens. Unlike an assumption of privacy for individuals, we should expect government activity to err on the side of openness.

Furthermore, in the democracies, we expect individuals to be able to make an informed choice when voting. If we learn that our governments and elected officials have in fact been engaged in a double game—that is, reassuring us in public while quietly engaging in very different calculations—then how can one plausibly claim with a straight face that this is the same as private information becoming public? Should citizens not know what their government is “really” thinking, planning, and doing? Should citizens’ knowledge of their government be confined to a need-to-know basis?

In the WikiLeaks case, involving diplomatic cables, there may be a Machiavellian argument for secrecy in effective diplomacy. However, the US and other government’s reactions to the case are very telling of how widely accepted the ideology of concealing the state has become. After all, how is WikiLeaks different from traditional journalism? Exposing the state’s real opinion, planning, options, and concerns is not the same as outing the foibles of a person. The stakes for citizens are extremely high with the policies pursued by contemporary states. The potential for catastrophic results from bad policies is pressing. Every citizen has a stake in the activity documented in the cables.

The revelations from WikiLeaks point to a much larger, uncomfortable question. What is the moral argument for a democracy keeping its citizens in the dark? I am not referring to the age-old argument about keeping things on a need-to-know basis on a particular issue, or in one clearly sensitive policy area like counterterrorism. In the case of the State Department, one can try to argue that secrecy and double-dealing is the nature of diplomacy. Maybe, but what would we learn if we could see what our government really says and thinks in its additional fourteen cabinet departments and scores of agencies with thousands of public officials?

The real philosophical question is the morality of systematically saying one thing in public while doing something else across the entire spectrum of policy areas. On this last point it is interesting to note that the authoritarian governments named and shamed in the WikiLeaks cables seem much less concerned than the democracies. The WikiLeaks case is interesting because it serves as an example of an intermediary suddenly emerging and credibly exposing the agency of the state.

The idea that intermediaries need some sort of authority or stature to expose the state seems counterintuitive to the anarchist tradition. However,

the idea of intermediaries returns us to the deeper philosophical question of the anarchist tradition, the problem of representation and the possibility of a “real” authority of politics. For many anarchists the question of challenging the state is not one of abandoning politics, or any form of authority. Instead, the issue is challenging the false form of politics and authority the state perpetuates. From this perspective, the call for intermediaries to expose the state may be less counterintuitive to the anarchist tradition than it sounds.

Intermediaries, representation, and anarchism

Even as unimpeachable a voice of the anarchist tradition as Bakunin says that there are some forms of legitimate authority. For example, consider Bakunin’s response to the question of authority: “Does it follow that I reject all authority? Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or engineer.”²² The authority of such specialists is limited by reason. As Bakunin explains further,

I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed upon me by my own reason. I am conscious of my inability to grasp, in all its details and positive developments, any very large portion of human knowledge ... Thence results, for science as well as for industry, the necessity of the division and association of labor.²³

This insight into where *real* authority lies is at the heart of the anarchist and syndicalist traditions.

When combined with the subject of political representation, this perspective on authority undermines most traditions familiar to political theory. From a broad anarchist or syndicalist perspective on the realities of authority and power, traditional politics within state institutions is a ruse that avoids the *real* struggle of class in the economic arena. The political arena is used to inhibit the working class from fighting the class struggle within the economic sphere, where they have potential power to organize. The foundational assumption of this line of thought is, of course, the kind of membership that we believe to be most salient for politics. A good example of the alternatives is provided in Jennings’ account of the syndicalist critique of political parties. As he explains in his history of syndicalism in France,

The class based nature of the *syndicat* was deemed to be in marked contrast to the pattern of support and membership of all political parties. What distinguished the political party (including those of the Left) was precisely that it grouped people according to opinions and not interests...²⁴

Thus, for syndicalists the *syndicat* was superior to the political party because it understood the significance of class allegiance. Similarly, *syndicat* industrial action and worker-centered activities were superior to traditional politics within the parameters allowed by the state. This logic informs the syndicalist call for industrial rather than political action. Arguably, this perspective also applies to what many political theorists would consider the cultural activities of the *syndicats*. Even social activities and organization could have a role to play in this struggle if those activities contributed to the education of the working class.

From this anarchist and syndicalist perspective, real politics is likely to take place outside of state institutions on economic and cultural fronts. In an early attempt to describe the ideas of syndicalism to a general audience, Bertrand Russell explained in *Roads to Freedom* that syndicalism “aims at substituting industrial for political action, and at using trade union organization for purposes for which orthodox socialism would look to parliament.”²⁵ Indeed, this is the logical strategy to pursue since, from the syndicalist perspective, parliament is a distraction: How could a state institution based on an idea of territorial representation and class co-operation possibly be effective other than as a diversion from real politics?

In contrast to continental syndicalism, the more institutionally minded proposals of the Guild Socialists in Great Britain provide us with a slightly different perspective. Here the focus is how to institutionalize real representation within a broadened political sphere. As G. D. H. Cole explains,

the Guild Socialist conception of democracy, which it assumes to be good, involves an active and not merely a passive citizenship on the part of the members. Moreover, and this perhaps the most vital and significant assumption of all, it regards this democratic principle as applying, not only or mainly to some special sphere of social action known as, “politics,” but to any and every form of social action, in especial, to industrial and economic fully as much to political affairs.²⁶

To this end, some varieties of guild socialism eventually proposed the creation of an alternative institution to parliament based on functional representation. Bertrand Russell explains the idea:

Guild socialists regard the state as consisting of the community in their capacity as consumers, while the Guilds will represent them in their capacity as producers; thus Parliament and the Guild Congress will be two coequal powers representing consumers and producers respectively.²⁷

Thus, the Guild socialists in Great Britain differed from Continental syndicalists in their attempt to take functional representation inside the

state's political institutions. This move would convert (or restore) the political sphere into a functioning place of *real* politics. According to G. D. H. Cole, the plan opened the possibility for the state to truly wither away as the functional representation of society replaced the "debris of a decayed system."²⁸ This change would happen gradually as traditional politics was replaced with the real political action required by class or functional interest.

Real politics seems to lie closer to the economic functions individuals perform and to the interests they hold in everyday life. Hence, we find the argument that contemporary political concerns are connected to more concretely defined interests such as our economic role, our environmental needs, or the needs of our cultural or ethnic membership. Second, both perspectives appear to blur the boundaries between the political and the cultural. In the case of contemporary political theorists, we see this trend in the growing focus on identity politics, while in the syndicalist tradition, it is more closely associated with educational, consciousness-raising efforts such as the cultural initiatives of the *syndicats*.

Recently, political theorists from the post-foundational (or sometimes still labeled "postmodern") camp have attempted to distinguish between "the political" and "politics."²⁹ As Oliver Marchart points out in a recent study of this school of contemporary theory, this distinction has radical implications since it opens up a broader range of cultural, economic, and social questions outside of mainstream politics. This turn toward identifying a broader range of issues as political bears a striking resemblance to earlier anarchist and syndicalist efforts to define a *real politics* as opposed to the political institutions of the state.

Just as the anarchist tradition posed the idea of a real politics to the sham of mainstream political activity, perhaps so should we think about Bakunin's idea of *real authority*. In this sense, the intermediaries who can expose the concealed, postmodern state are authorities in Bakunin's sense. Of course, for Bakunin there should always be an element of individual judgment. We should consult several boot makers or engineers and choose for ourselves which one convinces us with their skill and expertise.³⁰ So, too, a broad range of intermediaries is needed. We can then make choices between these voices and support those that expose the state.

Thinking about intermediaries this way also provides an important flexibility. In the case of differing political regimes, we can expect to find a variety of sources for this real authority. In the twentieth century under totalitarian regimes, even high art could acquire a political meaning within the highly charged ideological context of those societies. Under twenty-first century authoritarian regimes, anyone brave enough to speak out will immediately acquire the sort of stature that this simple act alone cannot expect under a freer democratic government. In this latter case, an intermediary would have to be a person who speaks out about the truth of

power, but in a way that distinguishes them from the cacophony of other voices citizens hear.

The role of an intermediary is not that of simply being another expert. Instead, it is a highly fluid role that various individuals can acquire within the political context of the state. The tools that the intermediary draws on to expose the truth about power and the state may be highly symbolic acts, satirical commentary, civil disobedience, or academic prose. What remains true in each case is that an individual who acquires this real authority can, perhaps only briefly before the political context shifts again, use it to expose the state.

Challenging the state to act

On that last point, perhaps we can look at the search for a real politics as an effort to challenge the state to act. In this sense, asserting a real politics becomes the effort to force the state to use its agency to address the policy problems it ignores. The idea of forcing the state to act does not fit well with the anarchist tradition. After all, for the anarchists the question is not how to improve the state, but the best means of replacing it. However, our postmodern situation may require the use of the state to address problems that the anarchist tradition did not imagine. Many of the catastrophic risks discussed earlier, like the looming threat of ecological disaster, may require us to harness the power of states to take urgent action. In addition, as Iris Young has pointed out, in the face of powerful, private economic power, democracy seems dependent on state power. Contemporary civil society is unlikely to defeat injustice alone without state assistance.³¹

On the other hand, there are many policy areas where using our agency from below can become a challenge to the state. This tactic of self-organization outside of the state is much closer to the anarchist tradition. But the ideology of concealment complicates the use of this more traditional tactic. The difficulty is in organizing action so that we expose the state's neglect in an area of policy, or challenge the state's claims of sovereignty by doing better than the state. The risk is always that the state co-opts our efforts and thus adds the policy concern to the list of issues it can ignore. So, we need to do it better than the state (and publicize the fact to shame the state), but not aid the state's concealment by allowing it to withdraw from yet another area of need.

How do we challenge the dominance of the contemporary state? Some observers think that individuals acting as consumers can have an impact. This idea lies behind claims that all of the consumer information and feedback now available online can be used for activist purposes. In a sense, this idea holds out the promise of bypassing the state in areas of environmental regulation or work conditions and instead applying direct

pressure on industry. However, despite the appealing logic of this idea, scholarly evidence is mixed. Early research indicated that such boycotts of activist pressure are much more dependent on capturing the media's attention rather than actually forcing corporations to act due to market pressure.³² More recent scholarship has pointed to the difficulties of using consumer power in the first world to influence conditions in the developing world.³³ In the past, boycotts of a particular business were effective. But in the future, with chains of capital so difficult to follow, and with businesses present all over the world, economic action would seem to require an ever-greater degree of international organization to be effective.

The other difficulty with using consumer activism is that it easily plays into the ideology of concealing the state. Consider the recent example of a call for mass action by bank withdrawal in Europe.³⁴ The celebrity advocate (French soccer player Eric Cantona) for this idea proposed that a bank run triggered by mass withdrawals coordinated on the same day would have a greater effect than any mass demonstration on the streets. Although Mr Cantona's call appealed to some activists, it failed to trigger any mass event. While the idea of organized consumer action for political ends remains an intriguing one, would even a successful action like this challenge the state? What is the policy or action that the protesters wish to see changed?

The weak regulatory framework that these banks exploited is a product of the state. If one organized a successful boycott of a large bank, then does it follow that the state will change this framework? Does bringing down a bank put pressure on the state? The ideology of concealing the state will argue in such a situation that consumers are directing their ire at a private economic enterprise rather than the state. Crippling such an organization leads to job losses for other citizens, not state officials.

On the other hand, consumer activism directed toward a whole segment of the economy could force the state's hand. However, we should expect such an outcome only in cases where the state fears a loss of economic competitiveness. This suggests that consumer activism would have to be organized on a scale that we have not seen. The marketplace in the most developed states mitigates against this as well with its bewildering diversity of products and services. Contemporary capitalism has created extremely complex chains of ownership within developed economies. The vastness of contemporary corporations makes it difficult for a consumer to determine which company or firm is ultimately behind a product.

If the point of challenging the concealment of the state is to expose its agency, then a more promising possibility is to expose the state's action (or lack of action) through counter organization. The logic behind this strategy is straightforward. If we fear becoming dependent on the state for our survival, then we should try to organize solutions outside of the state. One of the ideological motives for the concealment of the state is that none of us want to admit this dependence. By organizing outside of the state we can

reduce this dependence and remove one of the principal motivations for the ideology of concealing the state.

Again, there is a fundamental challenge to any organizational effort. By providing a service, or helping others outside of state structures, are we merely enabling the state's retreat? Consider the use made by conservative political parties of such efforts. In the case of the United States, President Bush Senior appealed for a "thousand points of light," that is a new grassroots voluntarism to fill the gaps left by budget cuts and trickle-down economics. Similarly, his son, George W. Bush, started his presidency with a call for "faith based" organizations to shoulder this burden rather than the state. More recently, Prime Minister Cameron in the UK has talked about the need for a "Big Society" and a smaller state in the face of looming austerity budgets. What does the call for voluntarism from these ideological sources demonstrate?

If we wish to revive the ideal of individual independence and liberty, then we need to work toward solutions on restraining growth, ecological improvement, and social justice that reduce our dependence on the state. We need to do this for ourselves to remove the inevitability of the state. On the other hand, the state pursuing the ideology of concealment would be only too happy to shift the burden of other responsibilities back upon society. The social work of NGO's funded by charitable contributions can be a useful shell game for the state. Claiming to reduce the tax burden, the state can instead hold hostage the conscious of the citizenry.

From this perspective, we need to think about grassroots organization in areas that expose the state rather than enabling its concealment. We need to avoid making the concealment of the state easier. Thus, we face a difficult challenge in structuring our efforts and assistance to others in a way that highlights the choices the state makes rather than covering for it.

Because of this dilemma, some activists have wrestled with the difficult question of tactics from an anarchist perspective. For example, Day has advocated the use of "Temporary Autonomous Zones" (TAZs) as an effective tactic.³⁵ Day turns to this tactic, originally envisioned and described by Hakim Bey because, if politics today is not about capturing the state, then what should it be about? The TAZ is a consciousness-raising tactic in that a space (either real physical space, an activity of some sort, or an imaginary space) is temporarily organized from below. The fact that these places are temporary in itself makes a point when challenging the state, which strives for permanent sovereignty. Day and others stress the transformative, education effects these experiences have on participants. For a brief period of time, a way to organize human activity outside of the state is enjoyed by participants. This suggests the possibilities that exist for a politics that is outside of the state.

This line of anarchist thought points to a possible tool to combat the declining social capital we see in the most advanced postindustrial societies.

If individuals are increasingly segregating themselves economically, through the housing market, and technologically, by social networking with like-minded others, then there is a clear need to bring people back together. This fits with the longstanding anarchist idea of consciousness raising through experience.

The recent experiences of the Occupy Wall Street movement seem to confirm this view. On the one hand, the movement seemed to rely on media attention, much like consumer activism, to get its message out. The fact that the movement relied most on the tactic of occupation also seemed to limit its broader effectiveness. One critical observer notes that Occupy was able to gain such notoriety because of its centralized location in the media focal point of Manhattan.³⁶

Nonetheless, the early evidence we have from these events is that the more lasting impact of the movement on participants was their experience with self-organization.³⁷ For the participants in the Occupy movement, the experience of maintaining the various Occupy sites as a community was very empowering. The various Occupy encampments required individuals to cooperate effectively to feed, shelter, and care for the common community. The key difficulty became transforming this small-scale experience into something much broader.

There is a parallel here to the earlier discussion of exposing the state's agency. As discussed above, it is difficult to imagine exposing the state's agency without some sort of intermediaries. Arguably, we face a similar problem when challenging the agency of the postmodern state. Scaling up the community action of something like Occupy so that it has a longer-lasting political impact is difficult to imagine without some form of authority emerging. The Occupy movement's attempt to be leaderless and outside of mainstream politics, from fear of co-optation, also made it very difficult to sustain or expand.³⁸ Yet, it is also difficult to imagine Occupy continuing to have an impact without engaging in politics.

If we are no longer operating within the state, then are our activities still politics? For many in the anarchist tradition, breaking free of the state means escaping from politics and its limitations. In classical Marxism, the nonpolitical "administration of things" is what Marx foresaw once the state withered away. Yet, political scientists would expect conflict in human society even if we live together differently than today. We know from the anthropological record that all human societies, or at least those beyond a simple complexity, had some form of politics—that is, if we understand politics as a set of practices that enable human beings to settle their differences without violence.

The lesson from the recent examples of WikiLeaks and Occupy Wall Street is that it is indeed possible to expose and challenge the contemporary postmodern state. However, it may be ineffective to try and argue that these are examples of change coming from outside of politics or without authority.

Instead, they seem to be examples of what the anarchist tradition would consider *real* authorities emerging to expose the state's agency in the case of WikiLeaks. Rather than being outside of politics, Occupy can be better understood as an example of a successful politics. Occupy points toward a politics that is capable of bursting through the noise and fundamentally challenging the ideology of concealing the state.

What is difficult to conceptualize is how to create and sustain such intermediaries and real political movements within our contemporary society. In many ways, the examples of WikiLeaks and Occupy struck even informed observers as having come from nowhere. How can we produce similar efforts in a more deliberate manner? Furthermore, can such breakthroughs be turned into something more sustainable?

The delusion of violent resistance and so-called direct action

In December 2011, security employees at Deutsche Bank intercepted a letter bomb sent to the bank's chief executive. Initially, suspicion fell upon fellow travelers of the Occupy Wall Street movement. However, this attempted act of violence was immediately denounced by the German branch of the OWS movement and a subsequent letter from the Italian-based, self-proclaimed, Informal Anarchist Federation claimed responsibility.³⁹ This group had claimed responsibility for a series of letter bombs sent to foreign embassies the previous December. The next day a letter bomb exploded in the offices of Italy's tax collection service, wounding an employee there.⁴⁰ These incidents seemed very similar to actions claimed in 2010 by a Greek anarchist group that called itself the "Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei."⁴¹

What can this sort of violence possibly accomplish? Nothing. Political change through conspiratorial violence is a delusion. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the forces of coercion and powers of surveillance available to contemporary states are virtually invincible. Spectacular acts of terrorism, or pathetic attempts at terrorism (which nonetheless manage to maim employees opening the mail), cannot change a contemporary, developed postmodern state. These actions may redirect the state's coercive power toward the source of the disruption, but the idea that randomly killing individuals, or even attempting to target famous individuals will ever lead to substantive political change within a stable, contemporary state is a chimera. The only thing that comes from this violence is further claims that our reliance on the state for safety and security is inevitable.

Aside from the practical futility of such actions, meaning they cannot obtain their object, there is also a moral failure. By committing violence for a political objective, one is not challenging the state. Instead, political violence

can be read as simply an attempt to replace the current state with another. Claims that a political program justifies violent action are a mirror image of the state's claims to its use of violence being legitimated by various theories of political legitimacy. Kropotkin pointed this parallel out in a 1920 letter to Vladimir Lenin. Condemning recent acts by Lenin's Bolshevik government, including the taking of hostages, Kropotkin warned that the Revolution was turning back into a state.

With all of its serious deficiencies (and I, as you know, see them well), the October Revolution brought about enormous progress.... Why, then, push the revolution on a path leading to its destruction, primarily because of defects which are not at all inherent in socialism or communism, but represent the survival of the old order and old disturbances, of an unlimited, omnivorous authority?⁴²

Thus, Kropotkin considered Bolshevik violence as the revolution lapsing back into the behavior of a state.

A similar argument can be heard a generation earlier in a letter from Proudhon to Marx. Writing in 1846, Proudhon admonishes Marx on the risks of establishing a new form of dogmatism. He then makes the following comment on the idea of direct action:

I have also some observations to make on this phrase of your letter: *at the moment of action*. Perhaps you still retain the opinion that no reform is at present possible without a *coup de main*, without what was formerly called a revolution and is really nothing but a shock. That opinion, which I understand, which I excuse, and would willingly discuss, having myself shared it for a long time, my most recent studies have made me abandon completely. I believe we have no need of it in order to succeed; and that consequently we should not put forward revolutionary action as a means of social reform, because that pretended means would simply be an appeal to force, to arbitrariness, in brief, a contradiction⁴³

Thus, from an anarchist perspective, political violence can be read as a moral failure. It is in fact a return to the claim that states have always made, that a theory of politics can somehow legitimate force.

Of course, violent resistance can be successful in changing odious regimes. Organized resistance from below can topple authoritarian states like Gaddafi's in Libya. Consistent resistance from grassroots, organized demonstrators brought down the sclerotic regime of Mubarak in Egypt. However, these are not examples of states on the cutting edge of development: ideological or economic. Violent resistance can still topple a modern, authoritarian state. In these cases the state is not concealed. Instead, the state is a very real force in the lives of citizens, and embodied in the personality of a strong man.

Within this context, resistance to a clearly defined opponent can be made concrete.

The other disadvantage modern authoritarian systems struggle with, when challenged by organized resistance, is that the regime's interdependence with the market is also easy to personalize. If we look at the Arab Spring in Egypt or Tunisia, one point of the demonstrators was that the ruler's family and assorted cronies enjoyed dominant positions across the economy. Thus, when challenging a modern authoritarian political system from below, resistance can point to a concrete set of individuals, easily identifiable by their bloodlines and clan ties, dominating the economy as unfairly as they do the state.

Therefore, violent resistance may succeed against modern, authoritarian states because of the difficulty of concealing the state under those conditions. Modern authoritarian regimes are heavily reliant on state intervention and it is easy for opposition to rally people against such a visible opponent. In addition, the claim of the resistance in these cases is not a complicated appeal to some ideological commitments. Instead, resistance to modern authoritarianism is based on the appeal to end concrete, human suffering at the hands of a very visible regime.

In contrast, this form of resistance has no moral legitimacy or political efficacy within a postmodern state practicing the ideology of concealment. If we imagine this context for a moment, then who is the opponent of the resistance? There is no authoritarian strong man in the most developed nation states. In the United States and other democratic systems, there is a rotating cast of politicians spread across visible institutions. In more advanced authoritarian regimes like China, there is a party and its *apparatchiks* spread across visible and hidden institutions. What is not present is a leader that can become the enemy for a movement from below. Attempts to cast politicians from the democratic systems in this role can only create laughable propaganda. Attempts to cast the party in China for this role run aground in their inability to give a face to the remote bureaucracy of that system.

Can we identify a similar set of individuals in a postmodern state? In the recent case of the Occupy Wall Street movement, the slogan of the 1 percent quickly caught on. However, could anyone in the United States or Western Europe concretely identify this 1 percent? Is it easy to link the same personalities from the political system to the heights of the economy? Furthermore, who among us, living within such political systems can show that we are not incriminated in some way? The Occupy Wall Street protesters were often seen using the technological tools produced by the system they were protesting.

The complexity of the postmodern state will always frustrate attempts at personifying the contemporary integration of states and global markets, because we are all complicit in many ways. Most of us continue to participate in the economic system of advanced, global capitalism despite our political convictions. Many of us continue to use products and services that are less sustainable despite our ecological fears. As Žizek points out, we

often aggressively insist on some smaller practices (recycling, buying local, etc.) in a way that makes us feel better, without really resolving these larger problems.⁴⁴ This dilemma is the challenge we face when confronting the postmodern state.

Thus, what would be the rational target of so-called direct action in a postmodern state? Ourselves because of the complicity we show when behaving like consumers in the market? The rotating cast of politicians in the shallow state who have delegated much of their agency to the deep state? The compartmentalized bureaucrats of the deep state who struggle to maintain some semblance of a national interest in increasingly complicated policy environments?

Aside from the moral failure of political violence, Violence marks the failure of politics. When a society has failed to resolve its differences through other social mechanisms, violence is the result. Thus, anarchism in a postmodern state should focus on establishing a real politics within the society. Violence means giving up on politics and claiming a source of absolute authority as difficult to legitimate as any state's.

Some final questions

Increasingly, we all face threats from political violence (i.e. international terrorism), environmental degradation, and economic disruption that ignore borders. Our societies are increasingly diversified through international flows of immigration. Culturally, we live in a time of unprecedented collision between varying worldviews. Amidst this new dynamism, should we be surprised that nation states seem paradoxical? We remain citizens of states with borders dividing us “politically” despite our increasing economic and cultural integration. The resulting deficit in legitimacy for these nation states leads to the contemporary ideology of concealment.

Nation states are struggling to make themselves relevant and acceptable to populations that are caught in a precarious middle. We are increasingly connected to each other through a brutal, uncaring market mechanism whose ruthless efficiency has become part of the competition between nation states. When we turn to our political institutions for relief from the burdens of this inhuman market, we are told that nothing can be done. The state claims to lack the agency to control the market. Yet, many things are being done by the state out of sight, including the maintenance of this supposedly autonomous global market.

How long can the state's current ideology of concealment reconcile these tensions? The answer depends in part on how we, the citizens of the various nation states, choose to confront this ideology. This chapter provides some initial suggestions on exposing and confronting the ideology of concealment. So far, I have suggested that we need to find new intermediaries with *real*

authority who can expose the state. In addition, we need activism that challenges the state by doing things better than it can, without falling into the trap of monetizing our activity in the market. Finally, for those of us living in postmodern states, I have attempted to point out both the moral failure and the utter futility of political violence.

We can speculate further on the future of the postmodern state by asking some pointed questions about our current situation. In a sense, these questions are more theoretical than practical. However, challenging a dominant ideology requires countertheory. This means that we need to think about the bigger questions related to the concealment of the state.

First and foremost, if states are concealing their ability to act, so that some questions are removed from political contestation, then what is contemporary democracy? From a classical perspective, political organizations have often placed some questions and policies out of bounds by agreement. The rights enshrined in constitutions are in a sense agreements to set some areas of life beyond politics. Yet, with the concealment of the state, we are now seeing traditional political questions about economic management and social policy quietly removed from the public arena.

Does this mean that we are all heading for an authoritarian form of “managed democracy”? The importance of this question can also be seen in the way that concealment short-circuits so many mainstream ideas about keeping the state accountable. In much of the political science literature on democracy, the focus is on accountability and transparency. The ideology of concealing the state thwarts the best-intended policy efforts with its definition, from the outset, of what can realistically be done. The fact that an increasing number of states (with supposedly very different political regimes) are adopting the same policies should be of greater concern to us than it is.

Second, if states are invested in global capitalism because of their mutual competition, then is there a way to reduce this struggle? Would a reform of international relations remove our dependence on the life support of global markets? Is it then possible for citizens within democracies to decide for greater investment in social services rather than cutting budgets to be competitive? An attractive dream is to imagine how competitive such societies might be in the future after recasting their social arrangements in favor of more humane, internal investment in people rather than focusing on competition in global markets.

With the strategy of concealment, the shallow state increasingly focuses on cultural politics and symbolic actions. This is an unfortunate turn since it means that, at precisely the moment societies everywhere are being transformed by unprecedented levels of global migration, politicians are attempting to popularize their commitments to specific cultural traditions. Thus, we see the rise of right-wing political parties calling for the maintenance of “national identities” or “true nature of societies” around the world. This dynamic has emerged in many democracies including those

traditionally seen as very progressive and tolerant. What political outcomes can we expect from such deep internal contradictions?

If we cut through the ideology of concealing the state, then what are we left with? We see that a technology for organizing society is reaching its limits. There is an urgent need for more effective political participation. Yet, individuals face an uphill fight today over, what were in the past, very common political issues. As citizens find that representative government is less responsive, and that even local governance claims to be powerless over an increasingly large area of daily life, what will they conclude? As voices are not heard or ignored, the citizenry must resort to more confrontational tactics outside the norm of our current political institutions. However, as the Occupy movement showed, even successful political confrontation raises the question of what comes next.

What are our first steps out of this situation? First, we need to expose the deep state and its agency. As discussed above, intermediaries are needed to authoritatively expose the state. These intermediaries are also necessary to provide the expertise that can expose the complex activities of the deep state. The challenge here is for such intermediaries to show that they are a *real* authority in the anarchist sense discussed above. This suggests that we should look for new, disruptive voices rising from the more open media our contemporary technology provides. We should also look to that second route of establishing autonomous authority, the arts, for voices and actions that expose the state. These new intermediaries can (one hopes) expose the state's concealed agency effectively to the public because they are free from the political biases that undermine older channels of political commentary.

Second, our politics needs to highlight the ability to organize and get things done without the state. Such activities undermine the ideology of concealing the state because they teach us that our current dependency on the state is not a dead end. However, there are two potential pitfalls here. One is that the state, concealing its agency, may be all too happy to claim that its support in critical policy areas is no longer necessary, thanks to volunteer and charitable action. The second risk is that by turning away from the state, we fall into its ideological alter ego, the market. Thus, we need to create organizations that resist the co-optation of both the state and market. The first of these needs means that charitable organization needs to assist others while asking how much more could be done if the state applies its resources. The second of these needs means that charitable organization should reject the limitation that it must be self-supporting.

More concretely, both of these requirements suggest that organization from below should be iconoclastic. The rules of the market, with its conformity to "professional behavior" and business norms, should be rejected. Instead, an important alternative could be provided to the public imagination if public goods can be provided by radically different forms of human self-organization. Are there ways to provide education to working

families that do not look like traditional schools, or in our contemporary setting, for-profit charter schools? Can we imagine charities that break down the walls of client and provider in a new institutional form? In other words, can we imagine organizations powered by human agency that do not look like those of the state or the market?

Third, we should, as citizens of various political systems step forward and demand that the state *does* act in policy areas that we prioritize. Such a call seems contrary to the anarchist tradition drawn on in many places throughout this work. However, this call for pressuring the state to act satisfies two important, contemporary needs. The looming ecological threats of our time require the decisive, coordinating action that nations states have provided historically. The challenge though is for all of us to push our respective states to coordinate policy action on a planetary scale to avert universal disaster. Acting in concert is not what states are good at. Even with their current consensus on global capitalism, we see nation states still angling for the competitive advantage, or particular interest that allows them to “win.” Breaking this habit, and harnessing the power of the state to stave off ecocide, will require mass action by citizens across borders.

In turn, an effort to use the state effectively in policy areas like ecology can challenge the ideology of concealing the state. Tackling our current environmental crisis should show the citizens of the world that relying on markets does not produce optimum outcomes, but can instead lead to mutual degradation. If we can harness the power of the state to protect our ecological commons, by constraining market forces, then we could perhaps revitalize popular consciousness of the state’s agency.

By reviving our consciousness of the power of the state, we may also be working toward its obsolescence. Nation states have provided human beings with enormous power to coordinate, and thus exploit, the potential of society. Now that we live in a period where that exploitation has reached a dangerous pitch, through ecological ruin and technological risk, perhaps we will reconsider the utility of this invention. Such speculation may seem outlandish as we still live in a world of borders and states. Nonetheless, we need to accept that our old/modern politics, with its modern forms and institutions, is failing to fit our postmodern situation. We must try to re-imagine politics in this contemporary condition, and perhaps postmodern states are not part of that future.

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